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Ananya Vinay wins the 2017 U.S. Scripps National Spelling Bee



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By Lacey Johnson | OXON HILL, MD.

Ananya Vinay of Fresno, California won the Scripps National Spelling Bee on Thursday, taking home a \$40,000 cash prize after 12 hours of picking her way along a precarious lifeline of consonants and vowels.

Vinay, 12, correctly spelled the word marocain, a dress fabric made of warp of silk or rayon and a filling of other yarns, to win the spelling bee held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in suburban Washington.

She said she felt "amazing" after defeating Rohan Rajeev, 14, of Edmond Oklahoma during the stirring 25-word championship round.

"It was just fun to see how far it would go," Vinay said.

The two determined spellers went back and forth for about 45 minutes, peeling off word after word in tense competition of spelling prowess.

Cheiotompholyx, durchkomponiert and tchefonctue were among the words the two spelled correctly during the round. In the end, Rajeev misspelled the word marram before Vinay spelled two words correctly to win the bee.



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Ananya Vinay of Fresno, California celebrates after winning the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee at National Harbor in Oxon Hill, Maryland, U.S., June 1, 2017. REUTERS/Aaron P. Bernstein

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Vinay plans to split the money with her 7-year-old brother and put it in to her college account.

"She had a deep passion for reading. The biggest thing that she wants to do is sit and read," her father Vinay Sreekumar said.

Competitors age 6 to 15 emerged from early spelling bees involving more than 11 million youths from all 50 U.S. states, U.S. territories from Puerto Rico to Guam, and several countries, from Jamaica to Japan.

In earlier rounds, some spellers tripped over words including Corriedale, toreutics, cleidoic and panettone, weeding down the field headed for the finish of the 90th national Bee.

Others hung on by correctly spelling catafalque, outarde and chryselephantine.

"What?!" exclaimed Maggie Sheridan, 13, from Mansfield, Ohio, throwing her hands up in disbelief when she learned she correctly spelled whirlicote, a type of luxurious carriage, with one second to spare.

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Marlene Schaff, 14, was ousted by misspelling cleidoic, which means to be enclosed in a relatively impervious shell, like an egg.

"I'm disappointed because I was debating between two spellings," said Schaff of Lake Forest, Illinois.

The youngest-ever competitor, Edith Fuller of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who turned 6 on April 22, was eliminated from the competition late on Wednesday.

New rules this year are aimed at preventing tie endings like last year's, when two joint winners both got \$40,000 cash prizes.

(Additional reporting by Brendan O'Brien in Milwaukee, Barbara Goldberg in New York and Ian Simpson in Washington; Editing by Lisa Shumaker, Peter Cooney and Michael Perry)

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